

[Communications—1st Report]

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Arnold Manoff

ADDRESS 2 West 125th Street. N.Y.C.

DATE March 6, 1939

SUBJECT Communications - 1st Report

1. Date and time of interview March 2, afternoon.
2. Place of interview National Office of the American Communication Association 10 Bridge Street New York City
3. Name and address of informant Charles Silverman 10 Bridge Street New York City
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant. Nicholas Wirth
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

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Office neatly and simply furnished.

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NEW YORK Personal History of Informant

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Arnold Manoff

ADDRESS 20 West 125th Street, N.Y.C.

DATE March 6, 1939

SUBJECT Communications - 1st Report

1. Ancestry
2. Place and date of birth
3. Family
4. Places lived in, with dates
5. Education, with dates
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates
7. Special skills and interests
8. Community and religious activities
9. Description of informant

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10. Other Points gained in interview

Mr. Silverman is the publicity director for the ACA. He is a tall, good looking guy about 28, breezy, informal, tactful and extremely co-operative. Promised to round up all available material, to assist in making contacts, to publicize the project in the Union Newspaper, to help in any way possible. He was very much interested in the work being don. Introduced informant to Josephine Timms of Local 36 who will be interviewed soon.

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NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Arnold Manoff

ADDRESS 2 West 125th Street, N.Y.C.

DATE March 6, 1939

SUBJECT Communications - 1st Report

I'll tell you about the stand up the workers pulled when the Union was negotiating with Postal Telegraph. You've heard of the sit down. Well this was a stand up. Here's the way it happened. Around November 1937, we were negotiating with Postal for recognition and other demands. Things were going slow and then this action was organized which clinched the contract. Here's how it worked. The workers called it the Iron Ring. Now here's a map of the United States. Now if you draw a line through theses cities, you'll sse what was meant by the Iron Ring. It looks something like this

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WASHINGTON, PHILADELPHIA, PITTSBURGH, DETROIT, NEW YORK, BUFFALO, in these cities, stand up meetings were held simultaneously for three hours. All messages going East, West, North or South have to be relayed through one of these points. When the workers stood up at their machines and the action was [85%?] successful, well, it 2 stopped the work. It stopped 85 to 90 percent of the traffic throughout the country.

Things happened during those stand up meetings. The workers tell stories about it. They wrote songs about it, their own songs. There's no record who wrote them. Ten or fifteen people got together and composed them. They sang them during the stand up and they're still being sung today. Almost everybody remembers them. Here's how the action took place. Nobody knew just when and where it would start, not even the executive committees in the shops. But the workers had voted the National Office the power to call this action. At exactly 10:19 the organizer stepped into the Pittsburgh shop and he was supposed to blow a whistle which would begin the action. He had the whistle with him and he tried to blow a terrific blast. Nothing came up. That was hot. Finally the damn thing did let out a squeak and as soon as the Pittsburgh workers heard the whistle they flashed this message at the end of whatever message they were sending. STOP STOP STOP ACA STAND UP FOR BETTER CONDITIONS, and they stood up. The workers receiving the message sent it on and did the same. In a minute the action was flashed all over the country and the Stand Up meetings were on. When the three hours were over, someone flashed the word and in the same way they resumed work. It was that action that broke the back of Postal and they signed up. Here are some of the songs that were born during the time.

The is called the Postal Soup Song. It goes to the tune of My Bonny Lies Over The Ocean:

1. All my lifetime I worked for the Postal. Until I was near ninety-nine; And when I was laid off they told me 3 "We'll give you something that's fine,"

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Chorus Sou-up, Sou-up. They gave me a bowl of soup. Sou-up, Sou-up. They gave me a bowl of soup.

2. I punched ninety-seven an hour, And pasted up seventy two; And when I was finished they told me "Listen here's what we will do"

3. I had fourteen kids and a wife, Who were hungry and ragged and cold. And when I asked for a raise. Here is what I was told. Sou-up, sou-up, we'll give you a bowl of soup. Sou-up, sou-up, we'll give you a bowl of soup.

Here's another one that goes to the tune of the Merry Go Round Broke Down; Oh-h the CIO has won, the CIO has Won! Postal Tel can go to hell For the CIO has won The CTU broke down; oh the CTU broke down The CTU feels awful blue Cause the CTU broke down. Oom-pa-pap, oom-pa-pa! We will raise everyone's pay No matter what the phoney finks say Oh the CIO has won, the CIO has won Postal Tel can go to hell, For the CIO has won.

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This one goes to the tune of Put On Your Old Gray Bonnet. The ARTA used to be the initials of the union. Put on your ARTA bonnet With the union button on it And we don't care what the bosses say; For we'll be in clover when the campaign's over And we get our Union pay.

Here's one to the tune of Tipperary which was sung when the Union was organizing Western Union. It's a good thing to join the union. It's a fine place to go. It's a good thing to join the union And march with the CIO Good by to the speed up, Hello union pay, Rally Western Union workers for the ARTA.

Here's another one that was written by somebody who thought the Western Union Company Union ought to have a yell. It's called AWUE College Yell. Rah! Rah! Rah! Who

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are we? We are the members of the AWUE Ice cream, corned beef, goulash, hash —
Three dots, four dots, two dots, dash!

If you know Morse you'll know what the last line means.

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Here's a poem which refers to the famous whistle which started the stand up. Listen
my children and you shall hear Of the worm that turned in less than a year Of Akron,
Detroit, Milwaukee, San Fran, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, yeah man! And how
"Minny" threw the rats out on their ear. How the sound of the whistle's melodious note
Makes Postal Officials ready to quote; Increases in salary, conditions more fair, Written
recognition for CIO everywhere Just listen, be wise and take note.

And here's one that goes to the tune of Annie Doesn't Live Here Anymore. Annie doesn't
work here anymore. Now she hates to lose that average as before; She said she wouldn't
join the union on a bet, But now she's furloughed and oh does she regret. She wouldn't
keep her job secure and join the ACA We're sorry — But Annie doesn't work here
anymore.

There are more songs. There's a mimeographed sheet full of them which one of the local
put out for a dance. (The following are taken from an ACA Songbook) 6 TWENTY ONE
YEARS Oh hark to my story; Oh list to my tale 'Tis thrilling, 'tis chilling, 'tis full of travail. It
tells of my hardships, 'twill bring you to tears. I worked for the Postal for twenty-one years.
I was a young fellow when the company got me Ambitious and eager the whole world to
see My feet they were winged, my heart full of joy As I took my first job as a messenger
boy. I cleaned all the windows, the office I swept I clerked at the counter, and rarely I slept,
I planned to be wealthy to work hard and save. I worked fourteen hours, Oh, how I did
slave! I counted the dashes; I counted each dot; I studied for Morseman to better my lot.
My lot it grew better; but not fast enough, So I studied for lienman, though the going was
tough. On cold winter midnights, they'd drag me from bed, A storm would be raging, the

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wires were dead. My wife she'd be weeping, but I'd have to go To fix up the wires in the wind and the snow. Then came 1918; the boys went on strike, I thought they were crazy — the company was right; I stuck by the company — loyal and true; They made me a force chief — the strike it fell through. I sought a promotion, maybe vice-president, I worked like a Trojan without any lament. Alas, my dear brethren, I've lived to regret — I learned to my sorrow that companies forget. They called it depression — they said times were bad. They cut fifty dollars, and, oh, they were sad. They stripped me of force chief; they said they now felt I was the right age for a job on the belt. Come all you young people, with your hearts brave and true Don't believe any comp'ny — you're beat if you do! Trust only the union which fights without fears — I worked for the Postal for twenty-one years.

(Sung to the tune of “The Man On The Flying Trapeze”) Oh, the Postal officials are thinking all day Of dif-fer-ent ways that they can cut our pay, And now they have though of a very fine way Oh wait till I tell you the rest. They count up your errors, they tell you're rude. Your average is rotten and your attitude Is not what it should be, and you are no good, And so you are given the air. 7 A couple of weeks after you get the sack They send you a letter and tell you to come back If you'll work for 15 a week; Ooooooh ——— The old Postal system is rotten clean through, They chase you and hound you until you are blue, Now they're picking on some one - next week 'twill be you, Oh what are you going to do. Come join with the union we'll put up a fight. We'll protest and picket and show them our might Until we convince them to do what is right Oh join with the union today.

(Sung to the tune of “The Merry-Go-Round Broke Down”) The Postal Tel said no They hadn't any dough But ACA came queered their game Oh hear those whistles blow..... Oh, Mr. Gantt broke down He met us with a frown. We'll have some fun, before we're done Oh, Mr. Gantt broke down..... We will make old Postal pay For all the years that they had their way Oh, the CIO has won We have them on the run The Postal Tel can go to ——— The CIO has won.

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(Sung to the tune of “Hinky Dinky Parlez [Vous?]”) Postal workers went over the top
Parlez vous Postal workers went over the top Parlez vous They made up their minds to
raise their pay And so they joined the ACA Hinky Dinky parlez vous.

SOLIDARITY (Sung to the tune of “Glory Hallelujah”) *It is we who lay the wires, it is
we who make them hum It is we who keep united every land beneath the sun Yet how
miserably they've paid us for the wondrous work we've done But the union makes us
strong Solidarity for ever, solidarity for ever Solidarity for ever For the union makes us
strong.

*This stanza was composed by workers in ACA; the rest of the song is the known
“Solidarity For Ever.” 8 (Sung to the tune of “Vagabond King”) Work was very weary, Life
was sad and dreary Just a little while ago. But in massive numbers Rose we from our
slumber And for freedom struck a blow.

CHORUS Forward! Forward! the union challenge rings Forward! Forward! the union
workers sing. Evermore united Many thousands fighting March we on to victory! Like an
ocean roaring From the sweatshops pouring Forces massing strong. Stenographs and
Typists Teletypes and Presses All crafts join the mighty throng.

Chorus: Forward! Forward! etc. Union recognition Short hours in addition Higher pay we'll
win for all. None our bond shall sever Union, live forever, All for one and one for all.

PUT ON YOUR ACA BONNET (Sung to the tune of “Put On Your Old Gray Bonnet.”) Put
on your ACA bonnet, pin your union card on it, For we demonstrate today, Put a shine on
your brogans, and practice up your slogans For that's the union way. Put on your union
button, and then start struttin' Cause were in the C.I.O. We'll fight for higher wages, and
increase them through the ages WITH the C- I, C - I - O.

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HI-HO Hi-ho, Hi-ho, We'll join the CIO For shorter hours and more dough Hi-Ho Hi-Ho, Hi-ho, Hi-ho Security will grow Wherever workers in the shops go CIO Hi-ho, Hi-ho.

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JOIN THE UNION NOW(Sung to the tune of "Let's All Sing Like the Bridies Sing")

How can you have more time for play? Join the Union now! How can you got a raise in pay? Join the Union now! Organize to insure your job That's the only way! We've told you how; it's up to you now JOIN THEACA The Wagner Act protects your right To join the Union now. You no longer have any cause for fright So join the union now. One voice alone cannot be heard Why do you delay? This isthe time to put your name on the thelline. JOIN THE ACA.